

A Wild Thought

by Pamela Helmke

For many years PRAC and CSPRA have existed as complimentary and separate organizations. Both groups pulling together for common causes, but always separate. Over the years a few CSPRA members have joined PRAC, even serving on the PRAC Board of Directors.

Looking at the two Boards, the common goals, and the joint activities it seems that now may be the time for **PRAC AND CSPRA TO COME TOGETHER AS ONE PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION**. This may appear to be a radical thought. Many members of both organizations may have the knee-jerk reaction of "How silly, we can't do that, this will never happen." The time has come to stop reacting and start thinking of being proactive.

The benefits of a combine membership are enormous. A single, cohesive group, working together without redundancy, for the benefit the park ranger profession and our parks and open spaces. The combined membership of these two groups could easily exceed a thousand members forming a loud and unified voice to our elected officials and the public on issues that affect our cherished public lands and cultural resources.

With the addition of our fellow professionals in Nevada the combined organization has the potential to influence decisions for an even larger region. Fragmentation and duplication—two ideas that create havoc in our government and our professional organizations are what we have now.

Is it not time for the two boards to meet and begin to develop a plan to bring us together for the benefit of all?

Time To Renew for 2006!

Board elections are now over but there is still time to renew your PRAC membership for the new year. Not only will you continue to receive *The Signpost* but you get access to the member only portion of the PRAC web site. Discounts to PRAC sponsored trainings and the upcoming spring conference are another bonus

Your should have recieved your renewal notice by now. Don't forget to mail them back! If needed, you can always use the form on the back page of this and every *Signpost*

From the President's Desk

I'm honored and excited to be PRAC's next President. I have a lot of good ideas that will take PRAC to the next level as an Association and I have a plan to try and increase our membership as well as training's.

I want to thank Mike Chiesa for the four years that he put in as President and all the hard work that Mike has done to bring PRAC to where we are today. It will be hard to fill Mike's shoes. He was one of the more active presidents that PRAC has had in a while.

Now down to business...Are you ready for the 2006 conference? The conference team is putting the final touches on the registration packets that will be mailed out in early January. The conference fee is \$155, which includes sessions, lunches on Tuesday and Wednesday and the Wednesday night banquet. Please don't forget to register for your hotel room by February 10th in order to get the special \$25 room rate (Harras Reservations 866-473-7872). For more information go the website www.calranger.org and check out the BLOG

I also want to remind you that if you haven't already done so, now is the time to renew your dues for 2006. Dues are still \$45 for regular membership and \$20 for a student membership. 2006 also marks PRAC's 30 year anniversary. 30 years of bringing park professionals together. It almost brings a tear to my eye. I am putting together a celebration committee to recognize the 30 years of service. If you are interested in being on the Anniversary committee contact me at president@calranger.org

I am looking forward to the next two years.

Lee

P.O.S.T. Advanced Officer Training For Rangers

The Park Rangers Association of California in conjunction Sacramento County Parks will be hosting another Advanced Officer Training for Rangers. The Park Ranger AOT will be 40 hours, (5 days), of POST certified training, starting on January 23 to January 27 2006. This years training will include:

- Gang Awareness—8 hours
- Legal Update—8 Hours
- Handling Mountain Lion incidents—4 hours
- Foot/person Tracking—8 hours
- Vehicle Stops—4 hours
- Incident Command Systems—4 hours
- Dealing with Mentally Ill Offenders/5150s—4 hours

The training will be held at the Sacramento Regional Public Safety Training Center. Cost for the weeks training will be less than \$100 but is still pending. Those interested can contact John Havicon at 916-875-6672 or jhavicon@sacparks.org for further information.

CPR Guideline Changes

by John Havicon

This November, the National First Aid Science Advisory Board reconvened for their 5-year re-assessment of First Aid and CPR standards used in the United States. This is of importance as all First Aid and CPR training is based on the decisions of this board. The goal is to provide the most current and effective ways of providing pre-hospital care to injured victims by lay rescuers, first responders and advanced life support. Students taking courses will most likely see the changes next year to allow time to re-train the instructors and update First Aid/CPR manuals.

Changes in CPR

One of the significant changes is how all rescuers perform CPR.

New emphasis will be placed on more effective chest compressions with the goal of provide all

victims 100 compressions per minute, (except newborn infants).

1-person CPR: The new compression to ventilation ratio will be 30 to 2 rather than the 15 compressions to 2 breaths that we currently use. Infant and child compression rate is still 5 to 1.

Each rescue breaths should be given over 1-second and should produce a visible chest rise

Lay rescuers will no longer be taught to check for signs of circulation, (pulse), after giving 2 breaths, the rescuer will begin chest compressions.

Lay rescuers will not do rescue breathing without chest compressions.

Lay rescuers will no longer be taught to open the airway with a jaw thrust. Lay rescuers will use the head tilt –chin lift only.

All rescuers will be taught to take a normal breath, instead of a deep breath before giving rescue breaths.

If alone with an unresponsive infant or child, give 5 cycles of compressions and breaths, (about 2-minutes), before leaving the child to call “911.”

Changes in Defibrillation

The Advisory Board is recommending all Automated External Defibrillators to be re-programmed to deliver 1 shock followed by immediate CPR. CPR should continue for about 5 cycles, (2-minutes), before the AED reassesses the victim’s rhythm. AEDs are recommended for children 1 year of age or older. For a sudden witnessed collapse in a child, use the AED immediately. For unwitnessed cardiac arrest of a child, perform CPR for 5 cycles, (2-minutes), then use the AED. Smaller child pads are recommended. If the AED does not have smaller pads of a way to deliver a smaller dose, use a regular AED with adult pads. Child AED pads should never be used on an adult.

You can find all of the upcoming changes on CPR and First Aid on the American Heart Association web site: www.americanheart.org



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New Book Raises Questions About Park Ranger's Mysterious Disappearance

On July 21, 1996, James Randall Morgenson – one of the National Park Service's most celebrated characters—grabbed his radio and his backpack and walked out into the wilderness on patrol. He never returned.

In *The Last Season*, Eric Blehm takes us inside the mind of Randy Morgenson and meticulously recounts one of the most intensive search-and-rescue operations in NPS history. A backcountry ranger in California's High Sierra Mountains for nearly three decades, Morgenson was a legend within Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, but he was also human with inherent flaws. The solitary man was keeping a few secrets—secrets that led those searching for him to suspect that maybe he didn't want to be found.

Blehm goes deep into the heart of the High Sierra to chase the ghost of Randy Morgenson, weaving haunting details about the ranger's life with the story of those risking their own lives to search for a missing friend. What emerges is a portrait of a complicated, thoroughly original, and wholly fascinating man, and a look at what can happen when one lives a life without compromise.

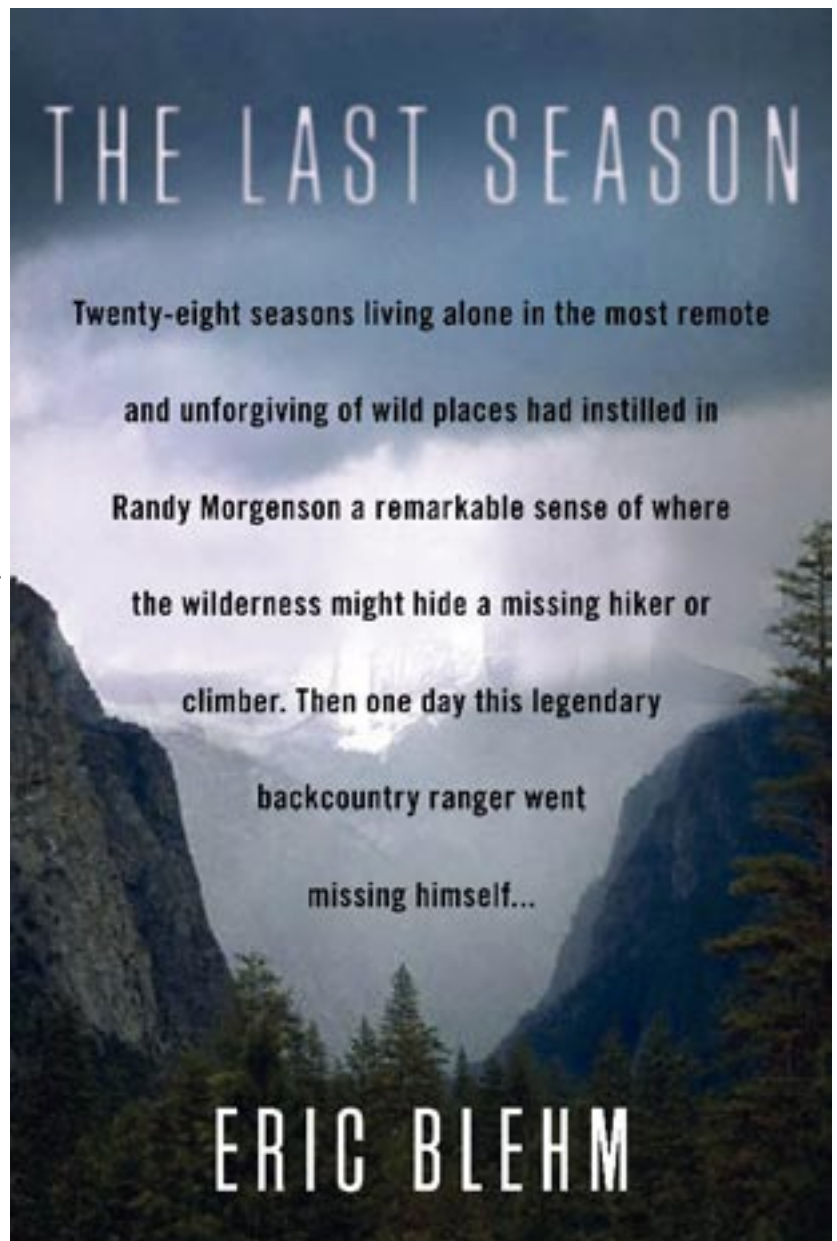
Was Randy Morgenson murdered? Did he take his own life? Or did he just walk out of the woods one day intent on wiping the slate clean and starting anew? *The Last Season* offers us the adventure we crave from wild places, the romance we seek in harsh lands and human emotion, and reminds us that no matter how deep we venture into the wilds, we can't escape ourselves.

Eric Blehm is the former editor of TransWorld SNOWboarding, the author of Agents of Change, and co-author of P3: Pipes, Parks, and Powder. He is also a freelance journalist who frequently writes about snowboard mountaineering and adventure travel. Blehm lives in Southern California with his wife and son.

The Last Season

by Eric Blehm
HarperCollins
April 1, 2006
ISBN: 0060583002

Ed. Note: This book can be pre-ordered from Amazon.com for \$16.47.



An Often Overlooked Resource in Parks, Historic Aircraft Crash Sites

Matt Cerkel

So what do you think when you hear the term resource management? Like most park professionals what first comes to my mind is something related to natural resource management. This would include protecting wildlife, conducting prescribed burns, dealing with non-native plants or monitoring threatened/endangered species in the parks. Have you ever given much thought think about cultural historic resources in the park you work at? While some of these resources are obvious, like an old ranch or mine, a Native American burial ground or even an old railroad right-of-way or stage coach route. Other historical resources may slip under the radar. One of these resources that is of a particular interest to me are historic aircraft crash sites.

There are a surprising number of historic crash sites in the parks of California. Just in Marin County alone there are at least six sites on publicly owned park or open space lands. These sites are on National Park, State Park, County Open Space and Water District lands. Sometimes crash sites may contain a large amount of wreckage; other times maybe only a few fragments. Often they are military in origin, especially from the period of the Second World War, like the sites in Marin. Other times they may be commercial or civilian in origin, such as the DC-6s that crashed on what is now East Bay Regional Park or Mid-peninsula Regional Open Space lands. Each site has a story to tell.

Just like any other resource in parks, historic crash sites need protection and some kind of management action or plan. These sites are more than some “old junk,” they are a tangible part of our history and in some cases may even be considered grave sites. I can tell you from personal experience that visiting crash sites can be a unique experience, it’s hands-on history and sometimes very moving. Just like the other resources we manage, historic crash sites face a number of threats. These threats include souvenir hunters, unethical collectors and even uninformed park employees. It seems many times we park professionals are either unaware of the crash sites or fail to understand their historic importance.

To properly manage historic aircraft crash sites requires research and planning. The research begins with learning about the crash, the events

surrounding it and the aircraft included. Research has been made relatively easy with the internet. Don’t be surprised to find information on a crash site in your park, sometimes a great deal of it, at websites on “Aviation Archaeology.” I have found several websites with information on the three Navy aircraft (a PBM-5 sea plane and two Corsair fighters) that have crashed on the Mount Tamalpais Watershed where I work. The best website to start your research on is the Aviation Archaeological Investigation and Research (AAIR) site, www.aviationarchaeology.com. The AAIR site is very informative, should get you started in the right direction and you can even order the military crash reports for the sites in your parks on it (Air Force 1918-1955, Navy 1920-1955). Once the basic research is done an actual survey of the crash site should be considered and it would be worth bringing in a trained aviation archaeologist to conduct it. It should be noted the Navy considers **any** Navy or Marine aircraft wreckage to be their property regardless of how long it’s been there, while the Air Force does not.

Once the research is done on the crash site, a plan should be written on how to manage the site. Items to consider in a plan would include the location and accessibility, it’s educational/interpretive and historic value and how to protect and monitor the site. In some cases it may be best to leave the site in a “natural state” and monitor it. Other times, if the site is easily accessible or well known, it may be a great educational or interpretive opportunity for the agency. If a crash site is being disturbed or damaged by visitors some kind of enforcement action should be taken. If the crash involved fatalities, an agency may want to consider placing a memorial or marker at or near the site.

While often overlooked, historic aircraft crash sites are an important and valuable park resource. They are a tangible part of our history and deserve the same consideration as **any** other park resource. They can provide a unique educational opportunity and need our protection. I hope to take the AAIR course on Aviation Archaeology at some point and if there is interest I may consider organizing some PRAC training on the subject.

New Visitor Center and Campground Being Constructed To Use For Training Seasonal Rangers

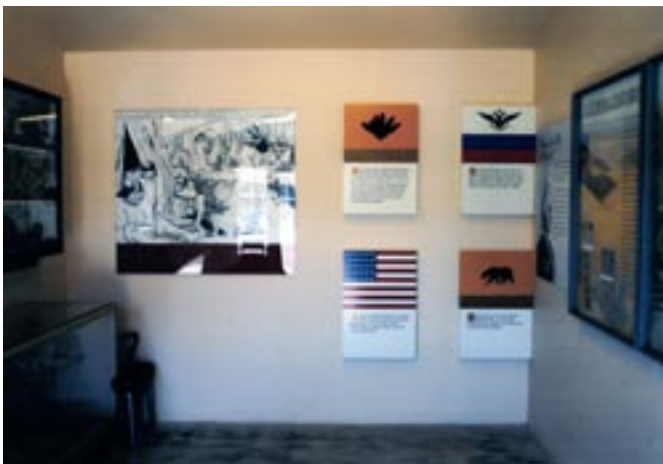
by Bill Orr

Ed Note: This is the last article that Bill submitted.

The Santa Rosa Junior College Public Safety Training Center is putting the final touches on a visitor center and campground in connection with the Scenario Village located on the Windsor Campus, approximately 60 miles north of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, CA. The 20 acre training center opened in 2002 to provide law enforcement, fire technology, and emergency medical training. The facility combines state-of-the-art classroom, a 15 place firing ranger, a physical training gymnasium, a driver's training track, and a Scenario Village for simulating realistic situations.



Detective Sergeant Scott Dunn, Sonoma County Sheriff's Office, has taken the lead on the organization, development, and furnishing of the life-like visitor center and campground. He has received donations of building materials, showcases, exhibits, signs, interpretive materials, picnic tables, camp stoves, etc. from nearby State parks, Regional Parks, Corps of Engineer projects, and the National Park Service. Trainees from all of these agencies will be able to use the facility upon completion.



The SRJC Ranger Academy began training rangers in March 1978. The first three classes were completed before the heavy travel season and graduated a total of 55 students representing 15 National Parks, three National Monuments, four National Recreation Areas, and four county parks.

The number of hours has increased on six occasions over the years to keep pace with new and improved training methodology and equipment. The instructional cadre has also been modified to increase expertise and innovation to the program. Approximately 1/3 of the instructors have been park rangers throughout the history of the academy.



As of 2005, there have been 109 programs and over 2,700 graduates. Although the curriculum has been modified many times in its 27 year history, the objective has remained the same: To provide a high quality affordable, basic law enforcement training program to prepare park rangers to be successful in obtaining a law enforcement commission and in doing a commendable job in the field.

So, You Wannabe a Park Ranger

by Steve Forman

Over the past 2 years, as I embarked on a new career as a park ranger, I found myself confused as to what type of ranger position was the best fit for me. Over time, I accumulated some education, experience and insight but even now I still have my doubts. Therefore, I decided to write this article with the hopes that it would help me and others, first define a suitable job description and then put together the right strategy for getting hired.

Ask yourself the question, “What kind of ranger do I want to be?” There are four functional areas (law enforcement, interpretation, resource management, maintenance) as well as many agencies (federal, state, county, city, private). Most ranger positions incorporate a high percentage of the law enforcement (LE) component. If LE is not for you then there are agencies that emphasize maintenance or resource management while interpretative ranger positions are harder to come by and usually require expertise or education in a natural science area. Matching your passion to the functional area of interest is ideal but there is one disadvantage; it limits your options and reduces the total number of job opportunities.

How do you find out about new park ranger openings? Try to develop relationships with park rangers in your own geographical area. Rangers are well connected and know when new positions will be announced at their agency as well as other agencies. Join a park ranger association like PRAC that has a website and job mart listings. Networking with classmates and rangers is a good way to stay informed. Periodically, scan all the state, county and city websites for employment opportunities and sign up on-line with the “notify me when a job of interest is announced” email lists.

The importance of ride-a-longs cannot be over-emphasized. Ride-a-longs provide the best inside look into whether this is the right position for you. Spend time driving around the park with a ranger. Get to know the parks, the trail system and any special features. Learn how the rules and regulations are applied according to the park district’s policies. This can also prove beneficial toward performing well in the scenario testing and the interview process. You may be able to get a read on what talent the agency is seeking. Some interview personnel are focused on LE, while others are looking for someone with a generalist background.

Ok, so now you found a position that interests you and are about to begin working on the application package. Think strategic when preparing all the documents. Review the job description bulletin for required education and experience. Match these requirements with a tailored resume and include copies of relevant certifications with the application form. Many park organizations will require a supplemental questionnaire that includes a variety of questions relative to experience with tools, equipment, medical training and LE. Before submitting the questionnaire have a valued teacher or ranger review it first.

If you have followed the steps above, you will likely receive a letter which states that you have passed the application review process and are being scheduled for a written test, a skills test or both. The written test is usually a series of multiple choice, true/false and essay questions that cover a variety of disciplines including maintenance (tools, equipment and methods), ecology, public contact/customer service and basic math. There is no special way to prepare. Two years education in a natural resource curriculum and seasonal park experience (park aide or OST) should provide you the knowledge to pass this testing.

The skills testing usually include several steps covering maintenance tasks such as lifting and moving materials with the proper equipment in a safe and efficient manner and a tools identification quiz. There may be a driving test as well as a vehicle inspection test. By far the most difficult part of the selection process is the scenarios. This is situational role playing where you are asked to play the role of the ranger and in real time deal with a medical emergency, a breach of park regulations or a customer service issue. Review your first responder and any LE training you have received then practice with people who can play the roles of the victim and the wrongdoer.

If you are rated high in the written and skills tests, you will be invited for an interview. Prepare for the interview by knowing all the details of the job description and qualifications and know your agency’s mission statement. Present the elements of your portfolio that clearly match the job description. There are three (3) personality traits to think about during the interview; remember to smile, to project energy and close with humility. Yes, you want to sell yourself but remember to balance the sales pitch with statements such as, “I am new to the field and think of myself as a sponge with a desire to soak up the knowledge from my supervisor”.

Interviewers want to evaluate your thinking process. They are likely to use the same scenarios as in the written or skills tests to measure your decision making ability. When asked to enforce a park regulation – remember to include the concept of voluntary compliance. If presented with a difficult co-worker situation always include the concept of conflict resolution.

You did your best but you receive a letter that says thank you but there were other candidates better qualified. Don’t mourn over the rejection. Call the interviewer or HR rep and ask for the results of your tests and score. How do you think I did during the interview? What additional experience should I acquire to get this job the next time I apply? You will be surprised at how accommodating both the rangers and the HR people are in giving this feedback. Don’t despair, all new applicants for ranger positions go through a series of rejections. More work experience and improved interviewing skills will over time get you the job you really want.

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The *Signpost* is published by THE PARK RANGERS ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA (PRAC). THE ASSOCIATION MAILING ADDRESS IS P.O. BOX 1533, STEWARTS POINT, CA, 95480.

The *Signpost* Editor is DAVID BROOKS. ARTICLES OF 1,000 WORDS, OR LESS ARE WELCOME. ALL SUBMISSIONS BECOME PROPERTY OF PRAC AND MAY BE EDITED WITHOUT NOTICE.

SUBMISSIONS CAN BE MAILED TO DAVID BROOKS, 560 HILLCREST DR., BEN LOMOND, CA, 95005. INFORMATION CAN ALSO BE SUBMITTED BY TELEPHONE AT (831) 336-2948.

Submission deadlines ARE THE LAST day of JANUARY, MARCH, MAY, JULY, SEPTEMBER, AND NOVEMBER.

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